

apuntes

Reflexiones teológicas desde el margen hispano

The Celebration of
the Tenth Anniversary of
the Hispanic Summer Program:
A Tribute to Justo González

David Maldonado, Jr.
Guest Editor

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The Celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of the Hispanic Summer Program: A Tribute to Justo González

David Maldonado, Jr. (Guest Editor)

When the Governing Board of the Hispanic Summer Program decided to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Hispanic Summer Program, it agreed that the most appropriate way to celebrate this historical mark, was to do so by paying tribute to Justo González. The decision to do so was easy, for Justo played a crucial role in assuring the continuity of the Hispanic Summer Program begun by the Fund For Theological Education, and maintaining the quality of the program. Although Justo has been involved in the Hispanic Summer Program since its inception, when the Hispanic Summer Program was at risk, Justo dared to dream and envision a Hispanic Summer Program as an autonomous organization constituted of sponsoring schools who would directly support the program through monetary contributions, participation of representatives in a governing board, and through the promotion of the program among students. The dream has come true after much effort by Justo to recruit sponsoring schools. To this day, schools are asking to be part of this creative ecumenical endeavor. As Director, Justo has not only recruited and related to sponsoring schools, supervised the administrator of the program, and served as academic coordinator, but he also has initiated an endowment drive to assure the long term continuity of the Hispanic Summer Program. So it is that The Hispanic Summer Program celebrated its tenth anniversary by recognizing the dream and the dreamer, the enormous contributions, and the tireless efforts and leadership of Justo González.

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The Governing Board agreed that conducting a Hispanic theological symposium was a proper way to celebrate our anniversary and Justo's contributions. Through a generous grant from Princeton Theological Seminary, students and faculty representatives representing past years, family, friends, and supporters were invited to Princeton for a weekend of celebration and conversation. In addition to Justo's overview of the beginnings of the Hispanic Summer Program, six persons were invited to address the symposium on various topics related to the event. Their papers compose the contents of this edition of *Apuntes*. Let it be known that all invited speakers were immediate in their positive responses. Their appreciation of the Hispanic Summer Program, but especially their appreciation of Justo González was a driving motivation in the preparation and participation in the Princeton event. To them we are all grateful for their generous and valuable contributions.

We would also want to recognize Catherine González, wife of Justo González. We thank her for her patience in sharing Justo with us and for permitting us to have his abundant time and energy as he travels and works on the Hispanic Summer Program. We value her generosity and hospitality for the times we invaded her home, and we have enjoyed her presence in several of the Hispanic Summer Program events. Catherine, muchas, muchas gracias.

Justo, there is no way that we can fully thank you for all that you have done for the Hispanic Summer Program, as well as for your contributions to Hispanic theological education. You have been our scholar and rich source of wisdom. You have been a mentor and wise counselor. You have been a colleague and partner. You have opened many doors and made it possible for many of us to follow. You have been a bridge bringing many of us together and moving us from being strangers to becoming friends. You have been a friend. You have been our brother. Justo, un abrazo, y gracias por todo.

The Hispanic Summer Program: Vision and History

Justo L. González

I must begin by saying that, although I am indeed very glad to be here, and although I am gratified that we are taking time to review and celebrate the history and achievements of the Hispanic Summer Program, I do not cherish the task before me. I suppose part of the reason why I have been asked to begin this session with a historical overview of the HSP is that I am a historian. And yet, it is precisely because I am a historian that I dread this task. I dread it, because there is nothing more difficult than the writing of a history through which one has lived.

When I first published *A History of Christian Thought*, I was faulted for bringing the story only up to the First World War. In later editions I have made some concessions to that critique--but not without a good measure of discomfort. As a historian, when I write the history of my time, and in particular of something in which I have been involved, I feel very much as I would if I were a landscape painter, and were asked to paint the place from which I view the landscape. I would look down, and see nothing but my own two big feet! Likewise, I feel quite incapable of writing or even telling the history of the HSP. At best, all I could offer would be a chronicle, rather than a history.

Then, there is an additional difficulty. When I refer to the years of the HSP as a history through which I have lived, I do not mean only that I witnessed it, but that also in a certain sense it has given me life. I have lived through it, and it is in part through it that I have lived. This makes the task even more difficult, and suddenly those feet of mine that I feel no desire to paint become even more of an obstacle to painting the larger, more beautiful landscape.

For all of these reasons, I am tempted to take a long running start, and to begin with the seminary that Father Antonio José Martínez, *el cura de Taos*, ran in New Mexico when it still was part of Mexico. Or, on the Protestant side, I am tempted to begin with the Spanish Department which the Executive Committee on Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., and Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary established in 1920--while they showed their prejudices with the express instruction that the position must be filled by a native-born American. Or we could look at the various Hispanic programs that were founded in the sixties and seventies in seminaries throughout the United States.

In fact, the most direct antecedents to the Hispanic Summer Program took place in the sixties, when the Association of Theological Schools--then the American Association of Theological Schools, AATS--began showing the first signs of interest in the theological education of Hispanics. Shortly thereafter, the Rev. Cecilio Arrastía was hired by AATS to explore ways in which theological schools could respond to the shifting demographics of the country and the growth in the Latino population.

Arrastía worked at coordinating and connecting the Hispanic programs that were emerging in seminaries, and for a while there was an organization linking the directors of these programs. He also worked with Bible institutes, seeking ways to improve and strengthen their offerings. To this day, AHET, in Southern California, continues that work.

In his DMin thesis for Princeton Theological Seminary, Arrastía suggested that a program be established to support Hispanic students in seminary and graduate schools, and also that Hispanic students have summer sessions dealing with specifically Latino issues. Although this is not the place nor the time to tell that story, for some time the Hispanic programs of the Fund for Theological Education, and now the Hispanic Theological Initiative, housed here at Princeton, took up the first challenge. First Rubén Armendáriz, then Antonio Stevens-Arroyo, carried forth the FTE Hispanic programs on a part-time basis, until Mike Rivas was hired full-time.

By the mid 80's, however, the grants that FTE had received for its Hispanic programs had practically expired, and only a skeleton program remained.

It was at that point, late in 1986, that I received a call from Dr. Oscar McCloud, then Director of the FTE, asking me to conduct a study on Hispanic theological education, with funds that had been granted for this purpose by the Pew Charitable Trusts. The result of that study was a fairly large grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts, mostly for scholarship funds for Hispanic ministerial and doctoral students, but also for a Hispanic Summer Program. It was at that point that Dr. Benjamín Alicea was hired by the Fund for Theological Education, essentially to manage the programs established under that grant.

It was in the course of that study that it became clear that some way must be found to support Latina and Latino students of theology, not only financially, but also at the deeper levels of self-identity and the actual content of courses. Although stated in various ways, many of the interviewees during that study described their educational experience in terms such as: "I went to seminary with a great zeal for my church and community, and full of questions. My theological education was excellent, and I am grateful for it. But when I began asking some of my questions, most professors had no idea what I was talking about. Eventually, I learned to ask the sort of question the professors expected. But now that I am back in my community, serving as a minister, I am discovering that my initial questions were right after all. I wish there had been something or someone, when I was in theological school, to help me insist on *my* questions." Others made a painful comment: "I never saw a Latino or Latina professor in all my time in seminary. If I had seen some, I would have had more confidence in my own ability, and I might have been a better student."

The Hispanic Summer Program was an obvious response to that sort of comment and experience. It is impossible for most seminaries and schools of theology to amass sufficient personnel, students, and other resources to offer a program that responds to these concerns. But if, as Arrastía had suggested, we could gather students from the various schools, and bring them together for a summer session, this

could begin to address these issues. For that reason, the proposal that we eventually presented to the Pew Charitable Trusts included a Hispanic Summer Program.

This, however, would not be just a gathering of Latino and Latina students to talk about their seminary experiences, or about their dreams for the future. On the contrary, there are some characteristics to this program that were considered essential from the outset, and still are:

1. It must be sound academically. Hence the procedure that has been followed from the beginning: All faculty in the Hispanic Summer Program are either currently teaching in accredited seminaries or fully qualified to do so. The host institution gives academic credits for the courses, and these credits are transferred to the institution where each student is enrolled. As a testimonial to this academic thrust of the Program, I quote the following words from Dr. Otto Maduro, a sociologist of religion of world fame:

In over thirty years of teaching in twelve countries throughout the Americas, I have very seldom encountered the dedication, the quality, the curiosity, and depth that I found among the students in the Hispanic Summer Program. I only hope that this program can continue and expand through the years to come. Its service to the churches, to the Hispanic community, to this country's future, and to our theological endeavor is definitely invaluable.

2. The program must be inclusive of male and female students and faculty. Also on this score the Program has had significant success. Although still not ideal, the proportion of women students and faculty is much higher than in most of our seminaries--and certainly higher than among the Latino population in seminaries and schools of theology. The impact of the HSP on this score is attested by the Rev. María Valenzuela, now an executive in the national headquarters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

This was my first opportunity ever to have Latino professors in theology. It was there that I discovered that we could actually do theology! This was very new for me, especially as a Hispanic woman. The ecumenical dimension of the program made it possible for me to do my present work, which involves a similar ecumenical openness.

3. It must be ecumenically inclusive. The Hispanic Summer Program has always had significant representation from the Roman Catholic as well as from various Protestant traditions. The number of alumnae and alumni from minor denominations, as well as from some of the larger Pentecostal groups, is also impressive. That this ecumenical thrust is much needed was made manifest by two students in the first two session. At Andover Newton, in 1989, a Protestant student commented: "Professor, I thought this was a Christian program. But there are Catholics here!" At the second session, at Oblate School of Theology, a Roman Catholic student came to request a change of roommate, because he simply could not share a room with a Protestant. Both left the HSP with changed views.

4. It must be regionally inclusive as well as representing the various subcultures within the Latino community. In order to do this, the Hispanic Summer

Program travels from place to place, being held in a different region each year. Also to attain the same end, the travel of students is subsidized, so that at no time will the student body be dominated in numbers by those from the nearby areas.

Following these principles, the first session of the Hispanic Summer Program was held in Andover Newton Theological School, June 25 to July 7, 1989. Very fittingly, Dr. Cecilio Arrastía taught one of the three courses we offered then. At that time, while I served as Director, I was responsible for the entire administration of the Program--except finances and accounts, which were managed by the offices of the FTE in New York, where Benjamín Alicea did all he could to lighten the load. At any rate, I hired a student as a very part-time secretary, and from a small niche at the end of a hallway we ran the Program for three years.

It was at that point that I learned how much work the administration of the Hispanic Summer Program involves: advertising, responding to queries, circulating application forms, opening files for each student, making travel, lodging and other arrangements, and a dozen other tasks. It is for that reason that I am convinced that the people who most deserve credit for the success and impact of the HSP, besides the faculty and students, are its three successive administrators, Ben Alicea, Pablo Jiménez, and José Daniel Montañez.

When that first grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts was about to expire, I [wisely!] requested to be relieved of these responsibilities, and eventually reached an agreement whereby I would continue directing the HSP, but the actual management of the Program was moved to the offices in New York, where Ben Alicea very graciously took over these tasks. That division of labor has generally continued to this day, and the only reason why I have been able to continue as Director of the Program is that in fact most of the work has been done by the various persons who have been responsible for the management of the program, and whom I have already listed.

Towards the end of the second grant cycle it became apparent that it was time to provide a firmer institutional base for the HSP--one that would not make it dependent on grants from foundations. At that point, I requested permission from the administration of the FTE to invite seminaries and other institutions of higher education to become sponsors of an expanded and autonomous HSP, with its own Governing Board representing its various sponsors. After a tentative proposal to do this on the basis of regional clusters of schools, it seemed wiser to work with individual institutions, and therefore I sent out a letter to 150 seminary presidents and deans, inviting them to move towards a new arrangement in which their institutions would become sponsors of the Program, by placing it in their annual budgets, and claiming our courses and offerings as their own.

I must confess that I had serious doubts that this letter would receive a very positive response. I have been at the other side of the fence, and participated in the process of developing a budget for a school of theology, trying to stretch dollars to the maximum, and I knew how difficult it is to convince an institution to invest resources in a program to be held elsewhere.

The first institution to respond positively to my proposal was this institution where we are now meeting, Princeton Theological Seminary. I do wish to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Gillespie, its President, for that phone call, which gave me the first ray of hope that my proposal would receive a hearing. After that call, others came in, followed by letters, and now we have 32 sponsoring institutions! Throughout this process, I have heard the voice: «Why did you doubt, oh you of little faith!»

It was as part of this new organizational structure that the newly formed Governing Board of the HSP contracted with the Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana (AETH) so that they would manage the program, much as the New York office of the FTE had done before. As Executive Director of AETH, Pablo Jiménez became the manager of the HSP--a task to which he brought his organizational skill, establishing procedures which we still follow. When Pablo left to join the faculty of the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest, José Daniel Montañez became the Executive Director of AETH, and the Manager of HSP--a task to which he has brought his exceptional skills in human relations, his attention to detail, and his amazing ability to keep his humor and his sensitivity even when under extreme pressure of work.

One of the somewhat unexpected blessings of this process has been the Governing Board, and most especially its Executive Committee, whose direction and advice have been invaluable, and whose members have shown their commitment to the Hispanic Summer Program in a dozen ways--including this very event. As I look back, there is a vast difference between the very first meeting of the Board, which coincidentally took place at this institution where we are now gathered, and where we were groping for ways of collaboration and mutual understanding, and the more recent meetings, where it has been quite obvious that the Board shares a vision, and is committed to bringing it to fruition. At this point, I must render tribute to Dr. David Maldonado, first Chair of the Board, who has just ceased in these functions.

However, all of this--more a chronicle than a history--does not adequately describe the Hispanic Summer Program. It speaks of its organization, its finances, its administration. But the HSP is people, faces, encounters, vocations... Therefore, making good on my earlier threat to be anecdotal more than historical, I conclude these remarks telling you of a student in the session of 1994, which was held at the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. Towards the end of the session he came to me and said: «I have a small son. For a while we thought he might be retarded. Then we discovered he needed glasses. You should have seen him discovering the world! Everything was new! Everything was interesting! What Joy! ... Here, in this program, you have given me new glasses!»

That is what the HSP is all about. Not about its own vision, but about the vision of our pastors and our leaders, about enabling them to see theology, to read the Bible, to see themselves, to see their own communities under a new light. It is because that has happened so often and so profoundly, that we really have something to celebrate today!

Retrieving Christ for Christian Theology: The Hispanic Summer Program

Roberto S. Goizueta

In the ten years of its existence, the Hispanic Summer Program (HSP) has become a unique instrument for the support and promotion of U.S. Latino religion and culture. In this paper, I would like to suggest a few ways in which this extraordinary program provides a unique service to the Hispanic community, particularly in the HSP's ability to build bridges, not only between the Hispanic community and the larger church, but also across divisions within the Hispanic community itself. Without risking hyperbole, one might even argue that, during those two marvelous weeks each summer, the HSP becomes a prophetic witness to the church, the theological academy, and the larger society. At the same time, we know that the challenge of building bridges of faith and justice across cultural and religious barriers that have stood for generations is an ongoing challenge, one that will demand even more from us in the future. As we celebrate the many blessings we have received—and the church has received—through the HSP, therefore, we are mindful that the Lord's work remains unfinished. Consequently, at the end of this paper, I would like to adumbrate some of the principal tasks that, I believe, lie before us and the HSP as we welcome the new millennium.

In discussing the uniqueness of the HSP, I want to highlight some of the ways in which the program fosters a deeper appreciation of Latino religion and culture by building bridges of understanding both beyond and within the Latino community. In both its vision and its practice, the HSP offers a unique opportunity for bringing down the walls that have for so long divided not only Hispanic culture and the dominant culture (in both the church and the larger society), but Catholic and Protestant Hispanics, the community of faith and the theological academy, clergy and laity, Hispanics of one region of the country from those of another. In all of these cases, the HSP—which is to say, all of you—has made important contributions to the church's reconciling and prophetic mission in this society.

First, this community provides a space for the expression of what Orlando Espín has called "*latinidad*," a space not often available in our everyday lives. From the first *abrazos* to the last *fiesta*, we feel at home here; in the midst of this land that Justo González has so aptly called our land of exile, we discover new sisters and new brothers with whom we share an instinctive bond. In a world where our language, customs, and even our very way of living are so often derided, this ground-breaking program has, since its inception, functioned as a home away from home for hundreds of Latinos/as. Though a home where we are, indeed, nurtured and affirmed, it is also a place where—like any good home—we are continually challenged to improve, to grow, to realize our full potential as individuals and as a community.

Such a place is particularly important for those of us who live day in and day out within the ivied walls of the academy. For the modern academy can be a terribly alienating place, especially for Latinos/as. The academy is at the very center of modern Western culture, reflecting the latter's values and shaping its worldview. Consequently, insofar as they have been nurtured in a culture still greatly influenced by the pre-modern mestizo or mulatto cultures of Latin America, Hispanic seminarians, graduate students, or professors will likely find the culture of academe alienating; if we are exiles in the U.S. society as a whole, we are doubly so in the U.S. academy.

The reasons for this are manifold. The individualism, rationalism, empiricism, and utilitarianism become crystallized in and, indeed, are most fully manifested in the academy. Here, these values are given their fullest, most sophisticated articulation. Here, therefore, the Hispanic is most likely to feel estranged. (There is good reason for the aversion so many Latinos/as have to the educational system in this country.) Whatever its "mission statement" or its desire to foster "community," the modern educational institution is founded upon a thoroughly individualistic, rationalistic, empiricist, and utilitarian understanding of the scholarly task: ideas are the product of an individual's autonomous exercise of his or her rational intellect, and they derive their value from their usefulness for the satisfaction of human material needs—assumptions that apply as much to nuclear physics as to theology.

Latino culture, on the other hand, presupposes a very different view of the process of education, or acquisition of knowledge. Latino culture emphasizes the communal and experiential character of knowledge; it does indeed "take a village to raise a child." In my own teaching, for example, I have found that Hispanic—and, especially, Latin American—students often have the most difficulty understanding the concept of "footnoting." Only after many years have I come to realize that the problem does not usually stem from a desire to "steal" someone else's ideas. Rather it stems from the students' difficulty in grasping the very notion that an "idea" can be the private possession of an individual; ideas are as much products of human communities as are persons themselves. (This, of course, is an assumption also characteristic of many "pre-modern" cultures, including the cultures represented in our Scriptures; the fact that the Gospel of Matthew may not have been written by Matthew himself is only a problem for modern Western persons, nor is it an indication of some desire to deceive on the part of early Christian communities.) Likewise, I have learned that Hispanic students regularly tend to study in groups rather than individually and that, indeed, they learn better and score better on tests when they study in groups. Euro-American students, on the other hand, are often reluctant to study in groups for fear that someone else in the group may "steal" their ideas. It is no wonder, then, that Hispanics will feel like fish out of water in an environment where collective, collaborative scholarship is discouraged in favor of individual scholarship.

In the light of this type of common experience, I have found the Hispanic Summer Program not only an exciting, supportive environment for engaging with both students and faculty in a collaborative educational process, but I see the HSP as a prophetic witness to an alternative, more liberating form of education and scholarship—one that embodies community rather than simply talk about it. The Hispanic Summer Program witnesses to the possibility of developing an authentic community of learning.

In such a community, all of us are both teachers and students. Without being overly romantic or starry-eyed, I can indeed testify that, if I have been able to share theological insights with the students in the classroom at HSP, I have also learned much from them, especially insofar as their theological insights and wisdom are so often grounded in a profound, lived commitment to Christ and the community of faith. I never cease to be inspired by the lived faith of the students and other faculty in the Hispanic Summer Program, as well as by the theological wisdom generated by that faith. In my experience, the participants in the Hispanic Summer Program do not merely talk about the importance of collaborative learning; they embody it during those two weeks when they come together.

At the same time, if there is anything that Latinos/as know about the reality of "community," it is that any genuine community will have tensions and, at times, conflict. Indeed, such tensions—if addressed and engaged honestly and openly—can, in the end, strengthen the bonds that join us; argument is a mode of connecting with others. While the cultural bonds that unite Latinos/as are quite evident among the participants in the Hispanic Summer Program, also evident are the differences that exist within our Hispanic community. These differences include not only those that distinguish, for example, a Puerto Rican from a Mexican American, but also the religious differences among us. Let us not deny the regrettable fact: we have inherited and continue to manifest the confessional divisions that have, for five centuries, scandalously divided the church as a whole.

Yet, here also, the HSP provides a prophetic witness to that larger church, a witness to the possibility of a Christian unity that affirms theological and cultural differences while, at the same time, grounding that unity in a common life, in a common praxis of discipleship. For, while the theological differences among us remain quite evident in the HSP, these are expressed and engaged within the context of a common discipleship that, instead of being threatened by those differences, is more often than not actually nourished by the challenges those differences represent.

In my own experience, for example, I continue to be challenged and, indeed, nourished by the faith of the many Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians I have encountered and come to know through the Hispanic Summer Program. (Indeed, the HSP is one of the very few contexts wherein a Roman Catholic theologian like myself would have the opportunity to interact on a systematic, regular basis with Evangelical and Pentecostal theologians and pastors.) Specifically, I am challenged to maintain my faith in Jesus Christ at the heart and center of my theology; I am challenged to base my theology in a lived commitment to Jesus Christ as the Way,

the Truth, and the Life. While this may seem trite, it is hardly so in today's professionalized academic world, with its postmodern rejection of truth-claims. In that world, the evangelical proclamation of such a belief will be countercultural and, indeed, subversive; in that world, personal belief and commitment must remain purely private and must not be allowed to influence one's "scientific" theological investigations. The Hispanic Summer Program provides a countercultural context where Latinos/as can come together to affirm and celebrate Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

I will never forget when I first realized that this disjunction existed between my faith and my professional life, even though my profession is that of a Christian theologian. Several years ago, I was attending a theological symposium. After three days of meetings, I was talking with one of the friends, a Pentecostal theologian I met through the HSP and who has had a great influence on me. I remember that, as we were chatting about the symposium, he mentioned that, in three days of sessions on theology, the name of Jesus Christ had not been mentioned even once. Not only did I find his comment both eye-opening and chastening, but I was also struck by the fact that, as a veteran of dozens of similar theological symposia and conferences, I had not even noticed the anomaly which my friend had observed; I had become accustomed to talking about "theology" without talking about Christ. It was at that moment that I decided to entitle my next book *Caminemos con Jesús*.

I do not think it merely coincidental that such an opportunity for ecumenical interaction—and the intellectual and spiritual growth made possible thereby—has presented itself within a specifically Hispanic context. For the Latino culture is one that, in general, privileges "lived religion" over confession itself. Given the holistic worldview of Latinos/as, religious faith tends to be defined by the relationships that faith affirms and supports—relationships among families and communities, as well as relationships between ourselves and God. That is, religion is indeed a "binding back" (as the term literally means) that, like all true relationships, involves the whole person: mind (beliefs), body (actions), heart (feelings), and soul (faith). To define religion solely in creedal terms, the locus of so much division in Christianity, is thus to reduce religious faith to but one aspect of its deeper meaning. Hence, Hispanics will often cross confessional boundaries to participate in both Protestant and Catholic--or even non-Christian--religious rituals and events, without seeing any inconsistency in such "pluriconfessional" activity; what matters most is the religious practices' ability to foster one's relationship with God, one's family, and one's community.

In the Hispanic Summer Program, our common discipleship is thus shared not only through our work in the classroom but through communal worship services, smaller prayer groups, everyday conversations in the hallways, and, yes, in our fiestas, whether planned or impromptu. These shared experiences help shape the bonds that are formed during the two weeks. Since our religious faith and commitment are not limited to our particular confessional beliefs—and, therefore, to the explicitly "religious" dimension of our lives--but embrace every aspect of our

lives, whether "religious" or "secular," every aspect of our lives together in the HSP nourishes the interpersonal bonds (whether the "person" be our roommate or Jesus Christ) that are, for us, the defining characteristic of our faith. As those bonds are strengthened, the confessional divisions become increasingly relativized; we become increasingly aware that what unites us as Christians and as Latinos/as is stronger than what may divide us. Indeed, we become aware that, whether Protestant or Catholic, Methodist or Pentecostal, the cultural bonds that unite us—our similar ways of *living* our different confessional beliefs in a holistic manner—are stronger than the more explicit confessional similarities a Latino Catholic may have with a Euro-American Catholic, or a Latina Pentecostal with a Euro-American Pentecostal.

As we celebrate the achievements and successes of the Hispanic Summer Program in providing opportunities for Latinos/as to come together, witnessing to a new model for Christian theological education, we should also acknowledge the important challenges that lay before us, both as Hispanics and as Christians committed to the pastoral and theological mission of the church. I would like to focus on three of these challenges, as they relate to Latino culture and popular religion. First, having elaborated a thorough critique of modern Western cultures, especially the dominant U.S. culture, we must be able to affirm—in an honest manner—the important positive contributions of Euro-American cultures to our U.S. Hispanic culture, so as to affirm the authentically *mestizo* character of this latter. I believe that this becomes an increasingly urgent task if we hope to reflect and respond to the experience of so many Hispanic youth and young adults, including young Hispanic professionals; many of these will continue to dismiss out of hand any portrayal of their U.S. Hispanic culture and their personal experience that either romanticizes Latin America culture or demonizes U.S. culture. It seems to me that, if we emphasize only the "Hispanic" in "U.S. Hispanic," we will inevitably ignore the experience of a great segment of our community while privileging, as our *locus theologicus*, the experience of recent immigrants, i.e., those whose identity remains almost exclusively Latin American. While it is crucial that we continue to affirm and foster our "latinidad," especially since this is precisely what remains obscured and, indeed, demeaned in the larger society, we must also examine the ways in which that very "latinidad" changes and evolves as it integrates elements of the ambient dominant culture, a process of integration and adaptation that is *both* a threat to the survival of our "latinidad" *and* a positive source of growth, critique, and improvement.

A related challenge is presented by the almost complete absence of a sustained socioeconomic analysis in the literature of US. Hispanic theology or in the ongoing discussions among Latino/a theologians and students. Such a critique has, of course, formed an important part of the theological method of Latin American liberation theologians from the beginning. Among Latinos/as, arguably the most forceful socioeconomic critique has been that proffered by Chicano scholars, especially during the 1970's, in their analysis of "internal colonialism." Much of this work has today been developed further in the academic field that has come to be

known as post-colonial studies. Such analyses can contribute to a more holistic understanding of Latino culture and popular religion by examining the ways in which these are mediated and embodied by socioeconomic relationships and structures that greatly influence the particular manifestation and meaning of cultural and religious practices. So, for example, we need to examine the inverse relationship between participation in popular religious practices (and, indeed, in Latino cultural traditions) and socioeconomic achievement among Latinos/as. Why are so many young Latino/a professionals disenchanted with the church and, in many instances, with their own Latino culture? It seems to me that we will not be able to address this issue effectively until we are able to view the "U.S. Hispanic experience" not only through cultural and religious lenses, but also through an economic lense—and to do so in a way that understands the marginalization of U.S. Hispanics as having its roots not only in cultural, racial, and religious intolerance but also in economic structures that continue to marginalize both the recent immigrant and the young professional. In collaboration with our Latin American, Africa American, Asian American, and Native American colleagues, we U.S. Latino theologians must begin to articulate a critique of a global neoliberal economic system that has pernicious effects not only "on the other side of the border" but also in our own barrios, on this side of the border.

If the above represent challenges to our way of doing cultural and social analysis, which address issues of cultural identity and social context, a more important challenge is explicitly theological—or, indeed, spiritual. The task I am referring to is that of living and articulating our faith in such a way that, as a people, we are not coopted by a dominant culture (including the church and academy) that reduces all social and theological issues to a debate between "liberals" and "conservatives." Indeed, one of our greatest contributions to the church in the United States may very well be a popular religious faith and theology that resists such simplistic categorization and thus offers avenues of reconciliation between "liberal" and "conservative" Christians in this country. What we offer is a popular faith that, while often doctrinally "conservative," is rooted in the margins of society, in a preferential option for the poor who live on those margins. Consequently, our is a faith that resists easy categorization within a liberal-conservative worldview. Latino/a theologians, students, pastors, and ministers, therefore, must also resist being coopted by either side in this internecine debate. Only insofar as we are successful in resisting such cooptation will we be successful in giving authentic expression to the culture and faith of our people.

As a place where Latinos and Latinas come together to celebrate our common faith and culture, the Hispanic Summer Program has been a great blessing for me, personally, and for hundreds of other faculty and students who have had the privilege of participating in the program. I am grateful for that privilege, and I look forward to supporting the work of the Hispanic Summer Program as it enters the second of what will surely be many more decades of service to the Latino community.

Hispanic Theological Education: The Hispanic Summer Program

Elizabeth Conde-Frazier

Introduction

My son is a very gregarious young man. He is always talking about something. When we lived in the Boston area we took advantage of the many historical sights and tours as a way of enriching the education of our children during vacation times. One summer we went on the freedom trail. One of the activities was the mock trial of a black free man who had been captured and tired as a runaway slave. After giving the youngsters the historical facts, they were to re-enact the trial. My son, who was then about six years old, was assigned the role of the free man who was being tried as the runaway. During the entire trial he said absolutely nothing. We were amazed at his silence and asked him about it later on. He responded by telling us that he realized that no matter what he said all the odds were against him. This caused him to feel as if his voice had been sucked up inside of him and it wouldn't come up from within him. He felt like his voice was a prisoner inside of him just like he was a prisoner in chains.

This experience is not unlike how I have felt when I have had to lift my voice in the presence of those whom I have been taught have authority because they are better than I am. I have internalized oppression in ways I can not understand and this has caused my voice to be imprisoned. When experiences of strong oppression take place in our lives, we are unable to find our voices and we become ventriloquists instead. We then mimic or repeat the voices of the oppressive authorities. The HSP has facilitated an environment and process whereby one's perspective of self begins to be healed slowly. Self-esteem is built up in persons and confidence helps our voice to re-emerge. So it is that I am able to stand before you to speak today.

The origins of the Hispanic Summer Program

How did the program begin? The HSP arises out of a need to provide contextualized and relevant theological education for church leaders in the Latino/a community. It functions therefore as a corrective to theological education. In that sense it is a tent of temporary justice erected in the midst of a desert of injustice. However, because living under the canopy of justice requires righteousness, the HSP has also been a place where Hispanics have been convicted of the injustices that come from inside our own community. The underprivileged status of women not only in theological education but in the leadership of the church, the family and society is such an example.

The Hispanic Summer Program arises out of the recommendation presented by Dr. Justo González, in the well known study entitled *The Theological Education of Hispanics*. In this study, Dr. González writes that "one of the needs most often expressed in interviews and responses to questionnaires is for more interaction with Hispanic peers and with Hispanic theologians, teachers, and scholars. There is the need for the affirmation inherent in numbers and in meeting people with similar

experiences and concerns.”¹ After briefly naming the difficulties that establishing a Hispanic seminary would involve, the study recommends the possibility of establishing the HSP. Today we celebrate the 10th anniversary of this program. What fruit has come forth from the program? There are several.

The Doing of Theology

The first fruit we can note involves the doing of Hispanic/Latina theology. The HSP has taught theology to persons as well as engaged them in the doing of theology. Numerous Latino/a theological educators have pointed out that the theology taught at our seminaries and other agencies of theological education does not relate to the reality of our Latino barrios to which our ministries are directed. The Latino Protestantism we have inherited is the product of a missionary enterprise that is in the process of being examined and questioned by our church leaders. It is a theology that may work well in the contexts where it originated but that may be alienating and counterproductive for the pastoral praxis needed in the Latino context.

The doing of theology involves certain key elements. One of these is the role of revelation as expressed in Scriptures. Location is key to how revelation is appropriated. The geographic location which some Latinos have experienced through migration and immigration, and the sociopolitical relocation of others by the expansion of the borders of the United States, has caused a crisis which has brought students at the HSP to a consideration of alternatives as they interpret revelation in light of their present situations. This has taken place as both professors and students have engaged in reflection and dialogue which has illumined the significance of their experiences not only for the Latino context but within the wider context of national and international trends and movements. This reflects the richness of the thinking and contributions which Latino scholars are capable of endowing their students with.

The doing of Hispanic/Latina theology also invites us to gain an understanding of the methods for constructing as well as deconstructing theology. This is critical for a community who hopes to be prophetic. In their book, *Method in Ministry*, the Whiteheads warn that the tradition “carries a history of both grace and malpractice.”² Gary Riebe-Estrella reminds us that malpractice is present not only in positions that reflect the anti-reign more than the reign of God, but that it is also exercised “by marginalizing and suppressing understandings of God’s self revelation whose truth cannot be tolerated because of political, economic and cultural agendas that are oftentimes antithetical to the divine embracing of our world.”³ To discern malpractice, Latino/a theologians and pastors must question the tradition from their

¹The Fund for Theological Education, *The Theological Education of Hispanics* (New York, N.Y., 1988), 120-121.

²James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*, rev. ed. (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1995), 8.

³Gary Riebe-Estrella, “Latinos and Theological Education,” *Journal of Hispanic Latino Theology* 4:3 (1997) 9. Also see Justo L. González, *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), chs. 6-11.

particular location. The tradition refers to both the theological and cultural traditions. For example, we have critiqued the missionary theological inheritance and how it spiritualizes the political, while also critiquing our cultural inheritances and how these have oppressed women.

The theology emerging from such a process is one that not only remains in our writings but also one that illuminates and deepens the lived praxis of the community. The Hispanic Summer program has seen women challenging the very structures of the program when needed while also fostering the scholarship of women. To teach in a way that persons can develop a theological discernment that allows them to critique the theology, as well as to have the skills for contextualizing and constructing theology and pastoral praxis, is to cultivate pastor/prophets. In this sense, the HSP has been a “Calmemac” the Nahua word for a school of prophets.¹

Rethinking curriculum

Another fruit of the Hispanic Summer Program has been the re-visioning of curriculum. The forms and content of the teaching at the HSP have begun to offer some glimpses for rethinking how curriculum is organized not only for Hispanic theological education but for theological education in general. There is much creative innovation that takes place in our teaching. However, we often fail to capture it fully because it takes place in our dialogue and in spur of the moment decisions about how we structure the class as we respond to the present needs of the students. We need to remind each other continuously to take ourselves seriously so that we will more formally reflect upon, articulate and give further form to these innovations.² They are gems to be polished. One such example is the interdisciplinary approach of Latino professors teaching in the program. For instance, to teach theology is to engage the social sciences, to teach ethics is to engage issues of economic development and empowerment, to teach religious education is to engage theology, missiology and post-colonialism. Upon doing this, we are producing a richer and multidimensional reflection. We do this because for Latinos, the theological enterprise is not done for its own sake but in the service of praxis. Christian praxis invites the various disciplines to engage in a sustained conversation.

This is in contrast to what Edward Farley calls the “fragility of knowledge” where the separation of disciplines of knowledge one from the other and from the culture of professionalism has resulted in the fragmentation of the search for

¹ For further discussion of the Calmemac and the role it played see Ana Maria Pineda, “The Oral Tradition of a People” in *Hispanic/Latina Theology: Challenge and Promise* edited by. Ada Maria Isasi-Díaz and Fernando Segovia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 104-116.

² We have learned to not take ourselves seriously. This is a manifestation of how we have internalized the voice that says that because we came up with the idea or design, because it comes so naturally to us and it didn't come from a book, it must therefore not be so important. It is inferior. This notion of our ideas being inferior, is the image of us that the oppressor has created. We now judge ourselves according to that image of inferiority. This myth of inferiority causes us to lose sight of our collective wisdom as a Hispanic/Latina theological community. The possibilities our wisdom holds and its contributions to the whole of theological education are then lost to all.

knowledge.¹ Could the practice of theological education à la HSP be the beginning of a re-envisioning of theological education? Could it be approached holistically and not as separate disciplines that force students to struggle to integrate separate categories of their ministries? Could it be taught more comprehensively and from the perspective of Christian praxis where the various disciplines together are engaged?² Does this not continue to affirm and give further shape to how Latinos do theology in a collaborative way, *teología en conjunto*, where we create a space for all voices to be heard--the voices of women, men, lay, clergy, professional theologian and student? If we stop to reflect seriously about this, it could lead to the reconceptualizing of the disciplines we teach and the relationship that they have to each other.

Relationship

As we measure the value of this program, we must also note that it is a program that has been about the most fundamental aspect of Christian teaching, that of relationship. This is key because religious education takes place in relationships. It is not just the setting forth of programs and curriculum as traditionally defined. Parker Palmer points out that spiritual teaching is the quest for truth, not only the quest for facts and reasons.³ Jesus is truth. In Christ, truth goes from being abstract and propositional to being humanly concrete and enfleshed. The first invites creeds, theological pronouncements and dogmatic worldviews. The second calls us to community, relationships with each other, God and creation. Truth therefore is found in the quality of our relationships. It is an epistemology of participation and accountability. It requires us to stand under while listening, so that we submit to hearing. This reshapes our understanding of dialogue. It is dialogue with the purpose of allowing God to be more fully revealed. The outcome of such a dialogue is transformation. The legacy of theology as solely propositional comes to an end and an incarnational theology emerges through relationship.⁴ Justo González tells the story of a Catholic and a Protestant rooming together during the two weeks of the HSP and emerging with different perspectives of each other's traditions. There are other such stories: such as one about Protestant students coming to appreciate the power of the sacramental as taught by a Jesuit scholar and priest. The relational context of the HSP leads to the beginning of the healing of divisions and prejudices.

¹ See Edward Farley, *The Fragility of Knowledge: Theological Education in the Church and the University* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) chap. 2.

² Gary Riebe-Estrella discusses these issues in his article "Latinos and Theological Education" where he uses the metaphor of a sustained conversation to envision theological education.

³ Parker Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983). In the following passage I draw from Parker Palmer's insights about knowledge.

⁴ In a paper entitled "Toward a Theology for Hispanic Pastoral Praxis," Justo L. González posits that in order for theology to be truly Christian theology, it must be incarnate. This, he says, "implies that it must take flesh in each culture and situation, in each time and circumstance." See Justo L. González, "Toward a Theology for a Hispanic Pastoral Praxis" *Occasional Papers*, 95 (March 1999), 1-2.

Mirror education

Lastly, the Hispanic Summer Program has been a place where in becoming mirrors to each other, we have understood what it is to be created in the image of God.¹ This has been liberating and life giving. To hold a mirror up to another is a gift. In the Latino community the different layers of conquest have hidden from us the image of God in us. In order to mask the contradiction of their own exploitation and barbarity, the oppressors' sense of self depends on the creating of the other as a non-self or a nobody. They have recreated us as the inferior other. This lie has become a cataract that has caused a temporary blindness of our souls. The soul is where we have our intuitive sense of somebodiness. The education of the mirror is to see from layer to layer beyond each one until we see Christ and see ourselves in Christ's image.² Removing some of the layers has helped us to see that indeed there is a veil over our eyes. Lifting yet another layer has allowed us to identify what the veil is made of, and analyzing the deeper layers has shown us where we have internalized the oppressive ways of becoming oppressors to each other. Rather than causing shame or guilt when discovering these layers, the mirror's reflection allows us to visualize its removal, thus creating the possibilities for us to see Christ through each other. We therefore turn to Christ, in whom lies the power of transformation. When we turn to Christ, the veil is removed. Now, all of us unveiled, can see the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror. We are called to be conformed to Christ, whom we behold and in whom we are transformed; from glory to glory, from day to day. This is a theological education that is transformational.³

Enrichment and transformation outside of the Hispanic community

I have reflected on the Hispanic Program from the perspective of Hispanics participating in it. But I wonder, how has the experience of participating on the Governing Board or of becoming a host school enriched your own understanding of the future of theological education and of the contributions of Latinos/as to that endeavor? It would be interesting to have such a dialogue and through it, to release the potential for the enrichment or perhaps, if I may be so ambitious, for the transformation of theological education as a whole. It is important to at least determine if the HSP has helped the institutions to bring about any change in their

¹ The differences between the woman and the man in creation mirror each other. In her article "Lifting Voices, Praising Gifts," Loida Martell-Otero mentions that God decides that the *ha-adam* needs a *neged'ezer*. "Translated literally, the adam, the earth being, needed a helper." Loida Martell Otero, "Lifting Voices, Praising Gifts" *Apuntes*, 13,3 (Fall 1993), 171-179. See also Phyllis Trible, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," *The Jewish Woman: New Perspectives*, edited by Elizabeth Kolton (New York: Schocken Books, 1976).

² I allude here to the passage in II Corinthians 3:13-18 and 4:5-6 about the veil over our minds.

³ Here I was inspired by James E. Loder's book *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective* where he discusses how Jesus becomes the structure of our identity. See James E. Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1998), chap. 5.

understanding of how theological education addresses the needs of the growing ethnic churches in our midst or if it has been used to avoid dealing with these issues? Has the HSP only been used by the member institutions as an excuse to further marginalize these issues? In other words, "The HSP takes care of that so we don't have to." Has mirror education also been a part of the governing board experience?

Jesus crossed all boundaries, even the boundaries between the human and the divine, and in doing so, brought them down. Can the Board identify with the concrete reality of Hispanics, not only our oppression, but very specially the gifts we bring to the ministry? Can this then allow you to advocate and strategically plan for change in your own institutions regarding the theological education of Hispanics or of other ethnic groups composing your constituencies?

The Hispanic Summer Program was born out of a problem. Will it continue in its present form because the problem persists at the core of theological education or will it evolve into other forms? Will you allow it to truly mirror both the challenges and possibilities for transforming theological education? The challenge is to allow the Hispanic Summer Program and its partner institutions to go beyond the usual boundaries and in solidarity to create a theological education that more fully mirrors back the kingdom values and therefore, produces leaders for the church and community ready for the new millenium.

As we celebrate the first ten years of the HSP, I would encourage us to reflect on the very nature of theological education and whom it serves. Look around: the HSP has fostered partnership among students, scholars, pastors, laity, administration, Latinos/as and non-Latinos.¹ I urge us to pursue our reflection as a dialogue within these partnerships that we may embody an epistemology of accountability and participation towards an incarnational theological education.

¹ These partnerships are a way of helping to bring change to the current structures of theological education. Administrators and scholars, who are both Latino and non-Latino, affect the system from above by changing the rules and opening doors. For example, the standards for tenure may be modified such that these not only enforce anglocentric continuity of values and interests at the institutions, but so that they reflect those of Hispanics and other underrepresented groups in theological education. This was a suggestion made by Roberto Goizueta during our discussion regarding these issues. Students and congregations pressure the system as they make it accountable for serving their needs, thus altering it from the middle. Working with the educational needs of Latina/o youth is a way of influencing the structures from the bottom. As the young people become empowered, they are like an army of termites that slowly but surely subvert the beams of oppression in the structure.

The Hispanic Summer Program: A Faculty Perspective on a Sanctuary of Ecumenical Reflection, Friendship, and (Re)Cognition

Carlos F. Cardoza Orlandi

I am honored to be among such great group of friends and colleagues. I am honored to address all of you on this great occasion in which we celebrate the life and work of a scholar, a mentor, and a friend: Justo L. González. I am also honored to celebrate the life, support, patience, and wisdom of Catherine, Justo's most important companion in this journey of academic Christian vocation.

Swami Yogeshananda is a close friend. He is a Vedanta monk and the spiritual leader of the Vedanta Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Very recently, the Center moved its facilities to a new location creating major disruptions in the life of the community, particularly in the life of Swami. After everything was in place again, Swami sent me an e-mail letting me know that he was going to take a couple of weeks vacation in California. When he came back we met to discuss the visit of my World Religions class to the center, and he shared with me about his vacation. He spent the two weeks at the monastery in solitude, reflection, and meditation. He also spent time with fellow monks in theological conversation and mutual care. As I remembered, he looked relaxed and peaceful. He said, "I was renewed during those two weeks. The monastery was a sanctuary where my spiritual being was nurtured."

This words have stayed with me as I worked on this essay. As I bring to my memory my teaching experience at the HSP, the image of a sanctuary overwhelms my thoughts and being. I am well aware that the term sanctuary has a strong political, economic, and cultural background among our people and particularly to the new Latin American immigrant community in the last 15 years.¹ I do not want to trivialize these meanings by alluding to the HSP as a sanctuary. But, in a very particular way, the HSP does serve as a sanctuary of friendship, reflection and (re)cognition to the academic and student Hispanic/Latino population in the United States and Puerto Rico. Why do I find this image of sanctuary so critical?

Ecumenical Reflection

I am one of those few persons that never participated in the HSP as a student. I knew very little about the HSP on a personal basis. I was aware of its importance based on the «testimony» of my colleagues and friends. Consequently, this was enough for me to become a supporter of the program and to put «mi granito de arena» for Columbia to become a member of the HSP board. I was always intrigued by the stories of students and faculty about the HSP. It was an experience that I hoped I would have

¹ Harold Recinos, *Who Comes in the Name of the Lord* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997) and his most recent article "Mainline Hispanic Protestantism and Latino Newcomers," in *Protestantes/Protestants*, David Maldonado Jr. editor (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999).

some day--regardless of the fact that because I am male, Puerto Rican, and Protestant, I knew how difficult it would be.

But God had other plans. HSP came to Atlanta in the summer of 1998, sponsored by Columbia and Candler, and I was asked to teach and represent the sponsoring institutions. To my surprise, I was asked to teach a course that would serve as a biblical elective. I did not know whether Justo was playing a trick on me, whether he loved me, or whether he wanted me to suffer. A missiologist--trained in history of religions and anthropology--teaching a course in Bible? Everything worked well--do not ask me how--and today I have added a biblical course in my dossier thanks to the HSP!

The HSP provides its faculty a challenging ecumenical environment. I had memories of my own theological formation at the Evangelical Seminary in Puerto Rico, an ecumenical institution. But the HSP is more than Protestant and Pentecostal faculty and students. The presence and participation of the Roman Catholic faculty and students brought to my attention a focused challenge: How can I, as a Protestant, teach a particular subject so that students--and faculty that from time to time visit other courses--(1) are not isolated or marginalized from the course, (2) experience the ecumenical character of a theological discipline, and (3) use the classroom space and work as a first step towards an ecumenical awareness and practice in ministry?

In many ways, the task of teaching at the HSP "undertakes a new and real discovery"¹ of teaching in a multi-traditional, multi-denominational, and multi-cultural context. It is a difficult task, it is an «undiscovered country», an «unchartered territory». To this effect, Justo González says:

Yet it is precisely to such discovery that God is calling the church today. It will not be an easy task, for it goes against the grain of our imbedded cultural racism, against many of our own self-interests, and against much of the current political (and I would add, denominational) trend. But God has never called the church to easy tasks. Tasks that can be undertaken without overpowering faith-command might as well be left for others. It is the tasks that the world deems impossible that most appropriately belong to the church. If so, the task of promoting a new and true mutual discovery among the peoples of this earth is certainly the task of the church.²

The HSP provides, in my opinion, the basic ground to face one critical missiological challenge, the catholicity of Christian congregations. As a result, our academic preparation and teaching needs to be ecumenical in order to facilitate theological, missional, and pastoral «bridges» among the different traditions represented in the HSP.

In my personal experience in the summer of 1998, Mereides Delgado and I were able to facilitate and celebrate the gifts in missional hermeneutics that the

¹Justo L. González, *Out of Every Tribe and Nation* (Nashville, Abingdon press, 1992), 14.

² *Ibid.*, 15.

different traditions brought to the class. For example, students celebrated and recognized the missional acuteness of the Roman Catholic tradition, the understanding of the authority of Scripture in the Protestant traditions, the role of the Holy Spirit in mission in the Pentecostal traditions, and the rich and critical contributions of Hispanic/Latina(o) biblical scholars. It was also exciting and challenging to help students--and ourselves--explore the relationship between missional interpretation, our particular cultures, and our different theological inclinations. Consequently, ecumenical reflection as a teaching activity in the HSP is more than a theological task. It requires stepping out of our most common context of teaching, in my case a Presbyterian/Reformed perspective, and entering an ecumenical context. Furthermore, such adaptation, such contextual movement needs to be done quite fast. Ecumenical reflection at the HSP covers many dimensions of live, personal and congregational, and requires prayer, creativity, and knowledge, refreshing activities for Christian scholars used to academic exercises.

Friendship

My wife always claims that I have too much fun in my professional meetings, particularly in meetings with Hispanic/Latina(o) colleagues. She actually argues that I do not work, that I go to those meetings to have fun. I can only say that my wife is an excellent observer!

The HSP gave me the opportunity to be among friends--faculty and students. The United States' context creates a very peculiar way of developing friendships. Coming from Puerto Rico, a small island in the Caribbean, I still find it difficult to nurture my relationships in this context. This may be a reason why I found the HSP faculty experience to be so enriching and collegial. I was blessed that soon after the session ended, I was teaching a course at Columbia to Caribbean students. I wonder how would I have felt after so much warmth, conversation, sharing of meals, debates, coffee hours, etc. if I would not have had the Caribbean course. (I must confess that the summer of 1998 was one of the most exciting and energizing teaching experiences I have yet had!).

Such an encounter, however, can be overwhelming and overbearing. Can you imagine the energy found in Hispanic/Latina(o) faculty in one place for two weeks? In my experience, it was quite a trip to have Luis Pedraja, Ada María Pineda, Justo González, and myself together, just to mention the most «settled» members of the 1998 faculty!

On the other hand, the experience of coming together as a faculty is a lesson on spiritual disciplines. I was compelled to keep a balance between speaking and listening, between giving my opinion regarding all issues and keeping a silent, but supportive presence, between reacting and responding to my colleagues, and between responding and learning from my colleagues. I know that we want to share our knowledge, our «new» and «unique» perspective, our new writing project. So much to share... and yet so few people that will listen carefully and appreciate our work. *At least we know that we will be heard among our colleagues at the HSP. We know we will receive a word of encouragement and support.*

A Sanctuary of (Re)Cognition

When I hear about the HSP, I am always aware of the program's contribution to the students' vocation and ministerial formation. Justo always reminds the HSP constituency and future donors of the many good things that the HSP represents. I do remember how he emphasizes the educational quality of the program, the role of the faculty in modeling to the students the theological vocation, and the program's ability to expose the students to the Hispanic/Latina(o) scholarship. I do believe that the students are a critical and substantial dimension of the program's purposes.

Nevertheless, from my experience, the HSP also represents a «Sanctuary of (Re)Cognition» to the faculty. First and foremost, the HSP is a sacred space where I did not have to justify or legitimize my theological and missional perspective. My voice, as a teacher and scholar, does not dissipate in the realm of «electives» as usually happens in a dominant mainline theological institution, but it becomes crucial in the Christian formation of the people of God. It is not incidental or accidental, but essential in the HSP curriculum.

Second, my teaching and scholarly work is not dismissed, but it is appropriated, critiqued, and reformulated by students and colleagues. I will always keep in my memory the excitement that students transmitted to me as they grappled with the material I was teaching. I need to acknowledge that I have also experienced this excitement with some of my Columbia students. It is, however, unique to hear and see Hispanic/Latina(o) students engaging with a material born out of your Hispanic/Latina(o) being.

Consequently, the HSP becomes a sanctuary where your theological reflection--which in many cases is a crucial dimension of our embodied faith--is recognized. It has an audience, a receptive and critical audience that engages with you, with respect and support, in your theological and faith journey.

Regretfully, (and I actually do not have an explanation), we scholars and "people who know how to write a footnote" also experience theological marginalization. And although we may accept such a reality, it drains and consumes our energies, which can be employed for other good causes of the Reign of God. In our mainline theological institutions some of us feel "like peasants among landowners." At the HSP we all feel recognized (whether we all feel like peasants or landowners is another question not to be discussed in this essay). The HSP is a sanctuary that renews our vocation, our faith and well-being in order to continue our task of teaching and doing Christian ministry.

I want to conclude this essay with some brief suggestions regarding the faculty collegiality and academic work.

First, I would like to see the possibility of creating covenants among faculty members so that we can be accountable to one another in prayer or in sharing one's academic work. Covenants can make us be aware of common struggles that need accompaniment and of the need to share what we produce so that it can be used by other colleagues.

Second, I hope that future HSP programs provide the faculty with structured time to engage with each other. This structured time can be used to share what we are teaching, identify connections between the materials being taught that summer, and the possibility of engaging in joint sessions in courses.

Finally, this is also an opportunity for senior faculty to invite junior faculty to write for academic publication. I will always be grateful for the opportunity that Justo González and Luis Rivera Pagán gave me to join a writing project and/or write an article which benefitted my academic development. The HSP, a Sanctuary of Ecumenical Reflection, Friendship, and (Re)Cognition needs to stay. It is a space for renewal and inspiration, for faith development and critical reflection, and a great idea of Justo and others. Thank you Justo!

El Programa Hispano de Verano: Perspectiva de una Estudiante

Sandra Rojas

Durante la década de 1980, más inmigrantes llegamos a los Estados Unidos de América en comparación con otras décadas. Las grandes concentraciones de latinos se encuentran en los Estados de California, Florida, Nueva York, Texas e Illinois. En 1990 el censo reveló que hay 22 millones de latinos en los Estados Unidos. Asimismo, se pronostica que para el año 2000 habrá más de 30 millones. Esto significa que muy pronto habrá un grupo minoritario cuantitativamente mayor que otros grupos étnicos. Personalmente llamo a este fenómeno la “reconquista silenciosa” o la recuperación de las tierras quitadas a México en el Siglo XIX por los Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, no solo es la reconquista, sino que es la presencia cultural, popular, religiosa, ideológica de los latinos en los Estados Unidos. Esta presencia lleva a programas de organización. Algunos latinos están organizados en barrios, escuelas, fundaciones, iglesias como una forma de resistencia ante la dominación, opresión, racismo y exclusión de los sectores dominantes de la sociedad estadounidense. Un ejemplo de la constante necesidad de organización latina es el Programa Hispano de Verano.

Tuve el privilegio de asistir al Programa Hispano de Verano en 1998, celebrado en Emory University en Atlanta Georgia. La experiencia vivida contribuyó a enriquecer mi perspectiva teológica y mi vida personal. Este enriquecimiento se debió al movimiento ecuménico del Programa Hispano de Verano. Se invitaron a más de 100 estudiantes de los Estados Unidos. Esto significó la convivencia por dos semanas con diferentes denominaciones, y la particular característica de creer, amar a Dios, y poner en práctica la palabra de Dios en la tierra.

Programas como estos son de suma importancia para los latinos en los Estados Unidos, porque demuestran el esfuerzo y el desarrollo de una teología propia. Esta teología latinoamericana se debe de seguir fortaleciendo. Primeramente, se necesita preparar más teólogos y teólogas que respondan a las necesidades pastorales de los latinos en los Estados Unidos. Estas necesidades de los inmigrantes son un gran “choque cultural”, el desconocimiento del lenguaje, racismo, exclusión. Ante estas situaciones, los teólogos desempeñan un rol importante como líderes para ayudar a mediar o resolver esas necesidades. Desde mi perspectiva, se necesita incorporar a los latinos como “sujetos históricos” a la sociedad estadounidense. La incorporación será a partir de las propias necesidades de los latinos o a partir de las experiencias concretas. También, los teólogos debemos de seguir fortaleciendo el movimiento político-social-popular de otros latinos y grupos que trabajan por la igualdad, justicia social de todo ser humano.

Segundo, el Programa Hispano de Verano es de suma importancia para el desarrollo de la teología latina en los Estados Unidos. Esta “latinidad” es una perspectiva distinta a las otras teologías, porque “nuestra visión” se basa en nuestras

experiencias de grupo marginado, oprimido. Las experiencias de los latinos son el aporte que los teólogos necesitamos primeramente tomar en cuenta, antes de proponer las grandes teorías teológicas o de repetir las ya existentes. La teología “latina” no solo es una nueva perspectiva teórica, también es la esperanza para quienes son víctimas del neoliberalismo. La construcción de la teología latina debe de responder a las necesidades de los latinos como una esperanza ante desafíos económicos y sociales, incluyendo situaciones de desempleo, racismo, bajos salarios, violencia, marginación, pobreza. Por eso afirmé que el Programa Hispano de Verano es de suma importancia porque esta contribuyendo a la formación de muchos teólogos, teólogas, pastores, pastoras, sacerdotes, quienes trabajan directamente con las necesidades de los latinos.

Tercero, los cursos del Programa Hispano de Verano son de un excelente nivel académico y enriquecen la preparación intelectual de los asistentes. En lo particular me ayudaron a entender el concepto de Dios y a romper con los viejos esquemas de un Dios totalitario. El curso que tomé en 1998 me ofreció una visión más colectiva de Dios. Específicamente un Dios que se encarna entre la opresión, las injusticias. Dios no es más el interlocutor de un mundo limitado, sino pasa a ser un interlocutor de los desafíos socioeconómicos y políticos de la nueva militancia de los latinos en los Estados Unidos. Ahora, Dios es la imagen de lo humano buscando una expresión de justicia e igualdad.

Cuarto, en el programa de verano a que asistí en 1998, por la mañana se celebraron liturgias. Estas liturgias las realizaron las diferentes denominaciones. De la asistencia a estas liturgias aprendí a darme cuenta como se “adora” a Dios desde diferentes enfoques, pero con una característica propia. Más tarde, me di cuenta que esta característica se llama “religiosidad popular”. Recuerdo que en estas liturgias cantaron con mucho entusiasmo, usaron incienso, símbolos, flores con la finalidad de adorar a Dios. Así, La religiosidad popular es una manifestación cultural y Los latinos trasladamos lo popular al plano religioso. Esta religiosidad popular es la práctica muy propia y particular, distinta a la oficial o dominante. Las manifestaciones populares usan símbolos, sonidos, aromas, danzas como parte de la expresión religiosa, de la fe, devoción que ha sobrevivido a la opresión y destrucción.

Quinto, el Programa Hispano de Verano fortalece una perspectiva latina de la fe cristiana y la realidad social que vivimos en los Estados Unidos. El fortalecimiento de esta fe cristiana se realiza mediante el respeto de las denominaciones, invitando a una diversidad y pluralidad de estudiantes. Enfrenta la realidad social que viven esos estudiantes otorgándoles becas y financiamiento. Un aporte muy valioso en la educación teológica para el avance de la formación de pastores, sacerdotes y líderes religiosos en los Estados Unidos.

Sexto, la educación teológica que trasmite el Programa Hispano de Verano es constructiva, pues enseñan a sus estudiantes a pensar, reflexionar, proponer. Enseñan que este proceso de creatividad se desarrolle en comunidad. Lo colectivo tiene vital importancia, ya que los cambios se desarrollarán en comunidad. El sentido de comunidad es trascendente especialmente en sociedades individualistas como la

estadounidense. Este sentido de comunidad se manifestó en el compañerismo entre todos los asistentes y sobre todo, en la “tradicional cena”. Estas convivencias son un espacio para el diálogo y la reflexión teológica. Así, los latinos hemos encontrado un lugar para la expresión de nuestra fe, nuestras ideas, nuestros sueños, nuestros análisis, nuestros desafíos, con la singularidad de que es en comunidad. A este proceso, en ciencias sociales se denomina conciencia social y política en la construcción de la historia. De esta historia emerge una nueva perspectiva y una nueva forma de hacer teología en los Estados Unidos.

Séptimo, el Programa Hispano de Verano enfatiza a sus estudiantes en valorar el talento y los dones de los latinos; quienes están dotados de una manera especial, de una intuición profunda sobre la vida humana, capaces de aconsejar, de intuir las dificultades, de expresarlas, de proponer salidas, de confirmar la fe de muchos. Los latinos, de cualquier denominación, sin grandes títulos universitarios, explican pasajes bíblicos a partir de su opresión, responden a cuestiones dogmáticas simplificándolas y colocándolas a nivel de su realidad existencial.

Octavo, el Programa Hispano de Verano a nivel particular, reafirmó mi fe. En ese entonces, tenía muchas dudas sobre Dios y mis estudios en teología. El Programa que tomé en 1998 determina mi permanencia en el área de teología.

Noveno, el desafío más importante del Programa Hispano de Verano es permanecer y fortalecerse. Sin embargo, nos ha dado un gran ejemplo durante estos diez años.

Finalmente, deseo dar las gracias a todos los que colaboran, porque ustedes trascienden positivamente en la vida de muchos latinos en los Estados Unidos. El esfuerzo y labor que ustedes hacen es, de alguna manera, incorporar a los latinos a la historia de este país.

Justo Luis González: Scholar, Man of His Community, Friend

Luis N. Rivera-Pagán

When David Maldonado called me several months ago to ask whether I would be willing to participate in a ceremony honoring Justo Luis González I immediately answered affirmatively. It is both a pleasure and a privilege to be invited to say at least some of the many good things I could assert about a person I have known, admired and loved for already thirty-eight years.

But when I received Maldonado's letter clarifying the character of the event, I became concerned. I discovered a distinction between what Virgilio Elizondo is supposed to do and what I have been requested to do. I am supposed to speak about the *person* of Justo and Virgilio about his *work*. A classic scholastic distinction between *vita* and *opera*, between the inner essence of Justo and its external manifestations, between Justo's *ousia* and his *persona*, in the classical Greek theatrical sense.

Now, think about it: In our post-Platonic worldview, in which being is constituted by a process of acts, how can one speak meaningfully about a person, a *vita*, without entering into the realm of his or her works, his or her *opera*? It is an arbitrary distinction, impossible to respect, if, at least, I want to assert something significant about Justo, apart, certainly, from saying that he is tall, well-built and handsome, specially now with the graying of his hair that gives him an additional dimension of academic aristocratic elegance? In our postmodernist environment, in which the classic Cartesian notion of a substantive subject has been exiled to the anachronistic quarters of Dante's inferno, how can I even try to say something worthwhile about the subject, the *ego*, of Justo, if I have to abstain from mentioning his actions, his work?

In theology, Karl Rahner's principle has the day: there is such a coherence and correspondence between the divine immanent and economic trinity that it is inadequate, from the human perspective, to talk about God's being without proceeding from God's acts in history. To distinguish therefore between the person of Justo and his work is thus quite a philosophically and theologically bewildering quandary. I must confess that this dilemma, this aporia, worried me deeply until I realized that the real problem is Virgilio's, not mine. He is the one to be concerned, not me. For two reasons. One: I speak first. Thus I can freely infringe and violate Maldonado's distinction and let Virgilio face the fact that he might be forced to allude to some of the things that I have already mentioned. As my good friends here know, I have never felt much guilt or contrition for transgressing social norms or rules. There is a second reason for transferring my concern to Virgilio whose mention I will postpone for some minutes.

Tonight, I will limit myself to mention briefly three of Justo González' many qualities:

First, Justo Luis González is a scholar of first order. He got his Ph.D. from Yale University, in historical theology, when he was not yet 24 years old. He has written or edited tens of books (my bibliography indicates sixty-seven, it might not be complete, and he is still going on) some of which are used as textbooks in theological seminaries and institutions in many parts of the world. Truly a book-of-the-month club just by himself! Written in Spanish or English, many of them have been translated into Portuguese, German or Korean, and are in the process of translation in Chinese. Just to pick an arbitrary date: in 1997, five books of him were published, not including his fourteen-volume edition of the works of John Wesley in Spanish.

His *A History of Christian Thought*--in Spanish, English, Chinese, and Korean--has served for many years as both an enticing introduction and a constant source of reference in the Christian theological traditions for thousands of students all over the world. The first edition of the first volume of that book was published in Spanish, in 1965. In my personal library, that work belongs to a special category. With the first volume of Jaroslav Pelikan's *The Christian Tradition*, a nice bound translation of Aristotle's *Politics*, and several others, it constitutes a distinguished never-to-be-forgotten-or-forgiveness; namely, it is one of those books that should be there, but are not. Those are the books which I know I have not lent, and yet I do not have. Which means that their absence is due to the self-serving generosity of some good friends who seem to consider that this is what friends are for, to borrow books without asking for them and even less giving them back. As you all know, there are friends and friends. And because many of these so-called friends are, unfortunately, Protestants, they do not seem to be intimidated by a sign we have in our library that threatens with perpetual excommunication, *sub excommunicationis late sentetiae pena*, as the traditional anathema formula used to read, anybody who dares to do what these theologically minded friends of mine have done: steal books from my library. So Justo's 1965 *Historia del pensamiento cristiano* belongs to the section entitled *libri absconditi*, in analogy to Pascal's *Deus absconditus*. There have been certainly, I know, further editions of it; but, you see, I considered that specific volume as a kind of *incunabulum*: I had not only been one of the first to acquire and read it, but was also witness of its process of creation, as a student in Justo's courses in history of Christian theology, between 1963 and 1965, at the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico.

This might be the proper occasion to spell why it is Virgilio and not me who should be deeply concerned about the tenuous distinction that the organizers of the event made between Justo's *vita*, *ousia*, and his *opera*, *persona*. I do not know whether you noticed the conversation between Justo and Virgilio when they first met today. Justo asked Virgilio, "Hey, have you read my last book?". The answer came back immediately: "I hope I did Justo, I sure hope I have read your last book." Only after most cordially accepting Maldonado's request to do what he is going to do tonight, as always in a splendid way, did Virgilio realize that for the next five months he would be doing nothing else but reading Justo Luis González. Which, as I assure

you, and Virgilio probably will emphasize, can be very instructive. But I have also the certainty that Virgilio is by now ready for another less prolific author.

Second, Justo Luis González is a man of his community. Scholars can be lonely and solitary. Not Justo. Many of his intellectual works have been conceived as contributions for the enrichment of a community--the Hispanic/Latino community. Most of his books do not only reveal his immense erudition and scholarship, but also manifest his vision and passion for the development of a Hispanic/Latino community that might be able to intertwine profound religious commitment with solid academic excellence. Many of his writings are tools for the betterment of his community; they are meant to be part of an intellectual process to reconstruct the memory, the grammar, and the culture of Christian faith from the perspective of the Hispanic/Latina community. His book *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective*, published in 1990, is one of the foundational texts in the construction and development of a theology with a Hispanic twist (or better: with a Latin rhythm, a Hispanic salsa) in North America.

As a creative member of his community, Justo has been able to gather the resources of many men and women of faith and intellect, many of whom are present tonight, in order to imagine first and forge then structures and institutions that might construct a network of solidarity. Let me briefly mention four of them: *Apuntes*, a journal which he has edited for almost two decades as a vehicle for intellectual discourse and dialogue regarding Hispanic/Latino religiosity; the Association for the Hispanic Theological Education, which he founded at the beginning of this decade and chaired for several years; the Hispanic Theological Initiative, begun only two years ago, the product of Justo's inspiration, whose Executive Director he is and which this summer moved its headquarters here to Princeton Theological Seminary; and finally the Hispanic Summer Program, whose main founder was himself, which brings together each summer Hispanic students and scholars in the theological fields and whose immensely fruitful existence during a decade we celebrate today.

Third and finally, Justo is a friend. A friend who knows that beyond and above the academic quest for knowledge, the search for *aletheia*, for *veritas*, there is love, in all its manifold expressions--*éros*, *filia*, and *ágape*. For, as Paul writes to the Corinthians, there are many virtues, but "the greatest of them all is love" (I Cor. 13: 13).

Do not get excited, by the way, at the mention of *éros*. In Justo's case, at least tonight, the love that I want to underline is the spiritual affection that shapes and forges true friendship. Justo is a friend in all the manifold nuances of that highly charged word. This I can say as a privileged witness, for if I chose historical theology as my academic field, if I went to do my doctoral studies to Yale, and if I am here in Princeton Theological Seminary as visiting professor, a lot of that has to do with the friendship and mentoring that I have received and enjoyed, during the last four decades, from Justo Luis González. And I know that I am only one in a "cloud of witnesses".

I can mention many expressions of Justo's friendship, but let me limit myself to two that have been of value for many here present. I do not know whether you have noticed that the so-called millennium edition of the Guinness book of records has just been published. It includes several new entries, categories and names. I examined it this week and, eureka!, there I found it that Justo González is honored as the holder of two world records. First, as the main worldwide author of prefaces, forewords, introductions and commendations of books written by Hispanic/Latino friends and colleagues. There it is, you can check it, in page 364 of the 2000 Guinness edition! Many Hispanic colleagues present tonight have had Justo as a kind of intellectual godfather and have shared a portion of his generosity by means of such a baptism: a preface, a foreword, a commendation of some writing, some text, that we have been developing for several years and that we present to the critical academic community with fear and trembling, but with Justo's benediction. That benediction might serve as a kind of exorcist formula, as a *vade retro, Satanas*, against possible demonic criticisms. And second, as the writer of letters of references on behalf and benefit of many Hispanic/Latina students and colleagues applying for divinity schools, graduate schools and theological seminaries. There it you can check it, in page 478 of the 2000 Guinness edition! I myself have benefited from both these two expressions of Justo's friendship and solidarity. Sometime by the end of 1965 Justo wrote a letter of reference to Yale University, and I was admitted to its Ph.D. program. In 1992, he wrote the preface to the English translation of *Evangelización y violencia: La conquista de América*. And that book has sold well.

The second dimension of Justo's friendship that I want to stress tonight is his humor. There are jokes that demean and degrade. There are jokes that blemish human dignity. We all know the many subspecies of that category--ethnic, sexist jokes, linguistic tricks that transform a human being into an object of laughter. There are malicious ways of ridiculing human flaws and handicaps. And then, there is also a type of witty, enlightening, light humor that overcomes hostility and creates smiling bridges of human understanding and compassion. Justo could write an encyclopedia by himself of jokes that could be included in this second uplifting category. All of Justo's friends must now confess that we are thieves, robbers, that for years we have been repeating here and there, jokes that we first heard from Justo. I am the first to confess *mea culpa, mea culpa*. Even tonight, by the way, as I am sure Justo recognized some minutes ago, I have repeated and plagiarized one of his witty jokes.

We can be certain that Justo shares the many turmoils of the soul that haunt our nights, when in solitude and stillness we face our frailty and mortality. In that moment of anxiety and anguish, that we all know, there is also what Milan Kundera once referred to as the laughter of God that refreshes and renews human existence and delivers our from its nightmarish specters. Allow me this theological heterodox statement: Justo's humor is an expression of that laughter of God.

The grace of Justo González might be the clue for one of his most important assets: his bewildering and bewitching ability to be a human vehicle of communion and collaboration between people so diverse in theological ideas, religious

experiences, and national identities, as we in this group are. In this community there are Catholics, like Virgilio Elizondo, Roberto Goizueta, Otto Maduro, Ada Maria Isasi-Díaz, and many others. There are Pentecostals, like Samuel Soliván, Eldin Villafañe, and Lucy Rivera de Alvarado. There is a legion of many different mainline Protestants. And there are the North Americans, Anglos and African Americans, who have accepted Justo's call to widen their horizon and ours, by allowing their cultural identities creatively to face ours. Beginning with the most creative and extraordinary Anglo near Justo González--his wife Catherine, the person most responsible for the fact that Justo looks today amazingly more handsome than when I met him first in 1961.

All of us here present are of different "colores, olores y sabores", but are, I am sure, unanimous in one statement about Justo: he is our friend. In this case this is not a cliché, not a worn-out word. I must confess, however, that I almost ruined my friendship with Justo some four years ago, in 1995. I had written a collection of essays to be printed in book form in Quito, Ecuador, by the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), under the title *Los sueños del ciervo* (Dreams of the Deer). It began with a dedication of the work to George Pixley and Justo González. In the preface I alluded to both of them as my dear former teachers and now friends. The person, in CLAI's office, in charge of converting the files from Microsoft Word to Page Maker and proofreading it, had just read in a newsletter that Justo González had recently passed away; he thus took the liberty to make a slight but significant change in my preface making clear the recent death of Justo González. The guy did not know that there were two Justo González: Justo and Justo's father, who was the one that had recently died. In my first reading of the galley proofs I did not notice that change, and only some minutes before giving the green light to print the book, did the confusion come to my attention. I almost achieved two original things at the same time: dedicate a book to Justo and prematurely announce his death.

I have just mentioned Justo González, Sr. I had the privilege of meeting and getting acquainted with three human beings who were extremely significant in Justo's life, and who I am sure are in his memory tonight: Justo's father, don Justo, his mother, doña Luisa, and his brother, Jorge. It was a family that was able to harmonize nature and grace, a home environment which made possible the intertwining of intellectual enhancement and profound religiosity, the happy union of faith and wisdom, of *fides* and *ratio*.

The loss of a dear one, of a person near to one's heart and mind, is always a painful event, but it is a sorrow which is part and parcel of human existence; it is an unavoidable dimension of this vale of tears that we have inherited as our universal human and historical context. Allow me, in this celebration of Justo as God's gift to us, to briefly bring to our memory Jorge, a brother and a friend who was supposed to be with us tonight physically, but whose presence is among us, in spirit, in the remembrance and the love of a brother, a widow, Ondina, a niece, Juana Luisa, and a sister-in-law, Catherine. On Tuesday, April 9 of this year Justo sent the following e-mail to many of us:

Friends:

My brother Jorge, who was not only my only brother, but also my best friend, passed away rather unexpectedly last night. I cannot tell you how I feel. Please forgive this general notice, rather than personal calls or contacts. Catherine and I crave your prayers, and are counting on your love and support. Thanks.

Justo

Several hours before that general message, Lizzie Oquendo had called me and reported the sad news. It had only been few weeks when I had the shattering experience of watching, in deep sorrow and loneliness, my mother's death. All of us here who have gone through the via crucis of been alone while a most dear person dies know that we will have deep in our souls, a severe scar that will never totally heal. The good news, however, is that we thus develop a special sensibility towards other people's similar experiences. Thus, some hours before Justo's announcement, I e-mailed him the following message:

Justo:

Lamento profundamente la muerte de Jorge. Aunque no hay nada más inevitable que la finitud y mortalidad, cuando nos toca de cerca en la persona de alguien que amamos y con quien nuestra vida se ha ligado por mucho tiempo, nos duele intensamente. Lo lindo es poder recordar a esa persona fallecida, cercana al alma propia, como un ser amable, cordial, inteligente, laborioso y noble, que por mucho tiempo compartió nuestra aventura de vida y fe. Puedes disfrutar de ese recuerdo y celebrar la vida compartida de tu hermano. Nunca olvidaré lo mucho que él disfrutaba de tus ocurrencias y de tu gracia. Dale por favor mis condolencias a su familia.

Un abrazo de amigo y hermano,

Luis

In many instances, Isabel Allende's terse and tragic dictum, included in one of her exquisite *Stories of Eva Luna*, might be true: ". . . sometimes death is more powerful than love." But not in the case and the person of Jorge González. In our stubborn and rebel memory, the love of and for Jorge González overcomes even the apparent finality of death.

In the name of all your friends and colleagues here present, I express you Justo, Ondina, Catherine, and Juana Luisa, the family of Jorge González, our deepest solidarity and our profound understanding of the sorrow that is still there, at the skin's level, as you could see through the tears shed by Justo this afternoon, at the beginning of his speech. You can be proud of Jorge, for he was a wonderful human

being, an excellent teacher, a graceful friend and a magnificent brother and husband. He was also a man of God. We miss him. A lot.

Don Justo, doña Luisa, Jorge. The first to depart from this earthly dimension of existence was doña Luisa, then don Justo, and finally, this year, Jorge. They all can rest in peace, for many reasons, one of which is their contributions to the formation of Justo as the extraordinary human being, splendid Christian, and excellent scholar he is. Wherever and whenever there is fertile ground, prime seed and substantial spiritual nourishment, we might expect a wonderful tree. Many of us here have been able to rest and refresh ourselves in the shadows of Justo's magnificent tree.

Thanks Justo, for your excellent scholarly production, for offering your time and immense talents to our community and for been the friend you have been, you are and you will continue to be. You have enriched our existence as individual human beings, as a historical community, and as a people of God.

May God bless you now and always!

The Work of Justo González

Virgilio Elizondo

Justo and I have been friends since the early 80's when we were brought together at the Mexican American Cultural Center by Bob Martin of the Fund for Theological Education to begin awarding fellowships to Hispanics who were going into doctoral studies. Working with Justo, Daniel Statello of happy memory and David Carrasco, presently a professor at Princeton University, was a marvelous experience. We immediately became close friends and our denominational differences were quite insignificant in relation to the common blood stream we shared as Latinos. We were amazed at how many similar experiences of marginalization and domination we had all had within our own denominations. We shared the common experience of exclusion, of being ignored, of being considered inferior. This common experience of suffering immediately bonded us together as close friends with a common cause: the full inclusion of our people in the ranks of our respective churches and of society in general.

The second year we met, we managed to invite all the Hispanics working on PhDs to come to MACC so that they could meet each other and exchange ideas. Adventists, Pentecostals, Baptists, Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians and others came together with our *Latinidad* as the only thing we had in common. Many expressed their fear and trepidation in coming to a Catholic institution. Yet, from the moment they arrived, everyone expressed the same reaction and feeling: this was the first time they had ever really felt at home among their own. After all, MACC was the only institution founded and operated by Mexican Americans. Here we were not in someone else's territory, no matter how well intentioned they were; here we were at home, our own home, our very Latino home, *nuestro hogar, nuestro templo*.

The discussions, fellowship and friendships which emerged from that first ever ecumenical get-together of Latino/a scholars at MACC were the beginnings of many of the great works which are taking place today. Much had gone before to prepare the way, but this personal meeting of real *hermanos y hermanas de sangre* was a most assuring and liberating moment of the process.

What can I say about the works of Justo that is not already well known? He is certainly well known as one of the greatest authorities in the world in church history and for his various works on preaching, theology, theological education and many other important topics. But to speak about these works, which many of you know far better than I, would take years! Yet I suspect one of the greatest contributions Justo has made through his writings in the last few years has been to elaborate the fundamental idea that all theology is always localized! It always emerges out of a given locality that is deeply conditioned historically, geographically, socially, culturally and biologically. Today, Hispanics are helping North American

and European theologians discover that their theology is indeed, a very ethnic theology. Because of their position of power and domination, they have simply seen themselves as universal and have not been aware of the richness and limitations of their own locality out of which they do theology. We are not only serving our people by reflecting theologically on the reality of our Hispanic-Christian faith, but we are likewise helping the mainline theologians understand who they truly are: not generic and normative humanity, but a beautifully particular expression of the human. In their particularity is their true greatness. Unfortunately, while they looked upon us and others as ethnics, they without hesitation or question regarded themselves as universal and normative for everyone. Even among the best of them, there was an unidentified arrogance, the arrogance of the conquistador and of the colonizer. Unfortunately this limited their vision and understanding and thus they were unable to appreciate the real richness of a truly world church, a true fellowship of peoples. Justo has brought his authority as a historian, a theologian and a great scholar to open the doors to a more Christian understanding and appreciation of recognized and defined locality as the essential starting point of the entire theological enterprise. Without this, the theologian will remain totally unaware of the unsuspected idols and demons of his/her own cultural-religious cosmovision. In this, Justo has liberated theology from the prisons of the generic to the open fields of particularity.

Of course, in doing this he was not really very original; he was simply being faithful to the very way the Master, Jesus the Galilean from Nazareth, theologized among his people. He has captured and made legitimate what should need no legitimization at all, but given the shackles of academic theology needed to happen: the way of the Incarnation. This is one of the chief characteristics of Hispanic Theology: that it truly takes the Incarnation seriously.

But Justo is not just a great scholar. He is also a great entrepreneur! He has the practical know-how of working with foundations, seminaries, universities and colegas como nosotros and rapidly translating Utopic dreams into living and functional realities. Justo is the soul and architect of the marvelous theological endeavors that have brought all of us together and opened the doors of serious Hispanic Theological formation to persons of all denominations. Hispanics teaching and forming Hispanics; Hispanics studying together with other Hispanics; Hispanics of various denominations studying in the same classroom and worshipping together in the same room. Through Justo, the grace of God has become evident in the many good works he has launched and kept going.

Even greater than being a great author and a great entrepreneur, Justo in the best tradition of the founders of religious orders such as Francis, Clare, Ignatius, Benedict, Scholastica and others is truly a "Padre Fundador!" He has brought about a new ecumenical unity not through dogmas or ecumenical dialogues. He is not the founder of a new church, but truly the Father of a new ecclesial family. This is definitely the first Post-reformation religious community in which all denominations are welcomed as they are! No one wants to convert the others. Actually, we want much more: we want to know one another, learn about each other's traditions, form

deep friendships beyond denominational lines while never denying our own. The only vow we take is that of friendship, respect and admiration and when we come together, we immediately know that we are among people that love us and admire us! This has enriched all our denominations. And this is only the beginning of greater things to come.

But by far the greatest work of Justo, the most important, the most creative, the most extensive and far-reaching is all of you--"los nuevos catedráticos"--that Justo has promoted. You are the organic theologians of our people who are never afraid or ashamed whether in church, in the barrio or in the academy of our profound faith in Jesus, our friend, our liberator, our savior. Our theology is definitely confessional and we are proud of it! You, the new generations of Hispanic scholars, are the pioneers of a new academy, not fully appreciated at the moment, often looked upon with simple folkloric interest. Yet we, in communion with the earliest tradition of theologizing, are ushering in a new way of doing theology. Hispanic theology is not just theology about Hispanics, it is a new methodology which will rise to a new Patristic and Matristic theology as rich as that of Chrysostomos, Augustine, Basil and others.

In our new academy, our theology will be critical while being very personal and social. Passion will be one of the marks of our new theologizing, and personal story/witness will be our major authorities--the word of the Abuelos, of los ancianos, of the sabiduría popular is no less of an authority on things of God than Barth, Aquinas, Luther, Rahner and others. After all, is it not true that what God has hidden from the wise and intelligent he/she has revealed to the little ones, the margined of society? Our people have an evangelical wisdom that needs to be brought into theological enterprise.

Our theology will be serious, connecting with the great theological tradition of our denominations, while taking just as seriously lo cotidiano del pueblo. For it is in the daily struggles for survival, dignity, acceptance and fellowship that our people experience and come to know the God who through Jesus of Nazareth is intimately present en la lucha.

Our theology will be universal precisely because it is firmly based on our particularity as Hispanics in the USA. Every good story touches people everywhere. They do not have to imitate it, but they can value it. We recognize the particularity of our story and location, value it, love it and want to share it with others, not impose, as others have imposed theirs on us. But from within the recognition of particularity, a true universal fellowship can begin. We always begin by defining ourselves. Here too, respect and learn from our own Hispanics differences, Mexican, Chicano, Cuban, Puerto Rican, recent immigrant, resident of this country for generations. We have a common soul that is very profound, but with beautiful regional particularities which are super exciting.

Our theology is atrevida (daring) for it dares to take the clothing off the academic idols so that they may appear naked for what they truly are: idols of death. We have to help dismantle what passes for religious science and dare to ask: how has

this helped the process of faith of our people, our culture, our nation? We have to produce and introduce a life-giving theology.

Finally, our theology has to be creative with that creativity of the Spirit that guides us to continue growing in our understanding of our faith as it affects the daily lives of our people. We have to question standard cliches and dare to ask what do they really mean, what do they really offer the people. Our theology has to lead to proclamation of the wonders God is bringing about in us.

Gracias, Justo. Tu obra más valiosa es que has iniciado un nuevo templo, como el Templo que N.S. de Guadalupe pidió en el Tepeyac, un espacio where all of us would be welcomed, loved and appreciated. Whereas many allow denominations to divide our people, even families, you have done the very opposite. You have created a space, a true living temple, wherein all would be welcomed. This temple is made up of the living and life-giving stones that our friendships have become--more precious than any temple of stones anywhere in the world. Mil gracias.

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